

**City Council Committee Meeting as a Whole**  
**DANBURY CITY COUNCIL**  
**\$99 MILLION SCHOOL BOND**  
**April 19, 2021**

Honorable Mayor Joseph M. Cavo  
Members of the City Council

Mr. DiGilio called the Committee meeting to order at 7:22 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:**

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:** Roberto Alves, Emile Buzaid, Mike Esposito, Warren Levy, Frank Salvatore, Colleen Stanley, Robert Taborsak, Irving Fox, John Priola, Mike Henry, Vinny DiGilio, Paul Rotello, Fred Visconti, Elmer Palma, Jack Knapp, John Esposito, Farley Santos, Duane Perkins, Ben Chianese, Nancy Cammisa, and Richard Molinaro.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**PRESENT: 21, ABSENT: 0**

**ALSO PRESENT:** Robert J. Yamin, Corporation Counsel; Les Pinter, Deputy Corporation Counsel; David St. Hilaire, Finance Director; Public Works Director/City Engineer Antonio Iadarola, Planning Director Sharon Calitro, and Jean Natale, Legislative Assistant.

In addition, Mayor Joseph M. Cavo, Danbury Career Academy Steering Committee Chair Mark Boughton, School Superintendent Dr. Sal Pascarella, Board of Education Chair Gladys Cooper and Members Kate Conetta, and Courtney Leborious, Director of Financial Operations, were present.

1. An Ordinance Appropriating \$99,000,000 For The Purchase Of Real Property Including Common Interest Community Units And Development Rights For And The Planning, Design, Acquisition, Construction, Equipping And Furnishing Of A New Grades 6-12 Danbury Career Academy School And Authorizing The Issuance Of \$99,000,000 Bonds Of The City To Meet Said Appropriation And Pending The Issuance Thereof The Making Of Temporary Borrowings For Such Purpose (the "Danbury Career Academy Ordinance")

Steering Committee Chair and Former Mayor Mark Boughton commented on the legislature's decision to reimburse the City 80% of the cost of utilizing commercial space for a school in August. Strict timelines and oversight by the State are involved. This will save tens of millions of dollars across the State and provide a unique academic experience. The concept is for 6th-12th grades. Mr. Boughton added that he has spoken about the program with the Governor several times. He spoke about the importance of flexibility in programming, workforce development, and opportunities for career exploration.

Public Works Director Antonio Iadarola discussed the unique opportunity provided by the State through Bill 70-10 Section 6. Bidding requirements are exempted due to the urgency of the issue. He noted the intense September deadline. Mr. Iadarola thanked Board of Education Chair Gladys Cooper and Boardmembers for their work in moving this forward, as well as his staff and Bond Counsel.

Finance Director David St. Hilaire reviewed the financial details and schedule of the bond, as well as interest rates.

Courtney Leborious, Director of Financial Operations, spoke last time noted this has the Board of Education's enthusiastic support.

Paul Rotello requested discussion regarding sending to the voters vs. in-house. He commented on the vaccination rate and the issue of safety which could be possibly resolved in the next few weeks and how that could affect the deadlines.

Mr. Iadarola responded to Robert Taborsak regarding the bid exemption, independent construction estimators to validate pricing, and independent appraisers. He responded to Duane Perkins who inquired regarding safety, noting providing separation and security is an important factor that the State is looking for. Mr. Iadarola noted there is information in the RFP in that regard as well. He responded to Colleen Stanley regarding keeping the building on budget, noting approximately 95% of the building is built. Additionally, he commented on guaranteed maximum prices.

Dr. Sal Pascarella noted the vision to carry out the mission to create career academies. He commented on the 80% reimbursement, the growth rate, and need for the school. He responded to Ben Chianese's questions regarding the enrollment process, noting it will be an adjunct to the main high school:

Mr. Pinter clarified the motion must be exacting in language and asked that it be amended as was shown below.

Mr. St. Hilaire responded to Duane Perkins who inquired about potential mill rate increases. Mr. St. Hilaire noted they are working with the State on increasing revenues before this goes on-line as the City has been shorted for many years. There is a push to accelerate the Alliance grant and the 80% in a statute is a solid commitment for this pilot program. He noted positives in City growth, but added that many are struggling. Mr. Boughton added that there is a formula to figure out staffing for the school and discussed ECS funds and multiple bills in the legislature with new revenue streams for local municipalities.

In response to Frank Salvatore, Mr. Iadarola commented on whether the September deadline would be delayed if this went to referendum. He added they have exceeded demographers' projections for the past eight years and children are coming regardless.

Joe Cavo responded to Frank Salvatore's questions regarding vaccination numbers, noting that children are not yet vaccinated, the virus has been somewhat unpredictable, and he would like to err on the side of caution with regard to a referendum. Mr. Pinter commented on the Executive Orders in relation to needs of individual cities. Mr. Cavo responded to Robert Taborsak regarding the potential cost of a referendum. Paul Rotello commented that while he is in favor of the bond, he is also in favor of it going before the people for a vote.

A motion was made by Councilman Levy, and was seconded by Councilwoman Cammisa, recommend to the City Council adoption of the Ordinance for vote by the City Council as a legislative action regarding the Danbury Career Academy 2021 \$99,000,000 bonds for issuance as presented. The motion was amended with additional language as follows: the Ordinance and documents entitled an ordinance appropriating \$99,000,000 for the purchase of real property including common interest community units and development rights for and the planning, design, acquisition, construction, equipping and furnishing of a new grades 6-12 Danbury Career Academy School and authorizing the issuance of \$99,000,000 bonds of the city to meet said appropriation and pending the issuance thereof the making of temporary borrowings for such purpose, such adoption to be in accordance with procedures and process authorizations in Governor Lamont's Executive Order EO 7-S.7 as extended together with findings by this Council as herein stated that, as confirmed within Section 9 of the referenced Ordinance, the use of the referenced Executive Order is reasonable and necessary to prevent significant financial loss, necessary for the protection of persons and property within the City, necessary to act immediately, and during the course of a continuing public health and civil preparedness emergency during a time when any in-person or other gatherings in public sessions or combinations are not recommended, together with the completion of appropriate and necessary posting, publication, and related notice, public comment, and related processes required by Executive Order EO 7-B1. The City Council fully recognizes it could have chosen to refer this recommended Ordinance for public referendum; however, makes this determination to utilize EO 7-S.7 intentionally and purposefully to safeguard, and protect, and secure the public health, safety, and welfare of the Danbury community and its residents. Motion carried 19-2, with Paul Rotello and Duane Perkins voting no.

#### Adjournment

There being no further business before the Committee, a motion was made by Paul Rotello, and seconded by Jack Knapp, to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting ended at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lori Goor  
Recording Secretary

Attest,  
Joseph M. Cavo, Mayor